



New Jersey Senate

TRENTON

March 19, 2019

The Honorable Loretta Weinberg

The Honorable Eliana Pintor Marin

Dear Chairwoman Weinberg and Chairwoman Pintor Marin:

As members of the New Jersey Legislative Select Oversight Committee, we are writing to you, the Co-Chairs of the Committee, to request that the Committee investigate the employment practices of the Schools Development Authority (SDA).

As we are sure you are aware, it has been reported that qualified, career employees of the SDA were terminated without cause or explanation. Those employees were replaced, at greater cost to taxpayers, by seemingly unqualified friends, family members, and associates of the SDA's new chief executive officer, Lizette Delgado Polanco.

We believe the requested investigation of the SDA represents the logical next step for our Committee. To date, we have focused exclusively on the employment of Mr. Albert J. Alvarez. While the circumstances of Mr. Alvarez's hiring and termination merit our scrutiny, so do the circumstances of the seventeen career employees who were fired by Mr. Alvarez, acting in his role as SDA chief of staff, to make room for dozens of apparent patronage hires.

Those former employees deserve the opportunity to tell their stories before our Committee, as do the current SDA employees who have expressed concern to us that personnel files at the Authority are being tampered with to conceal "improper and unethical activities at the SDA."

We note that our Committee's formative resolution, in part, charges us with investigating "all aspects of the policies and procedures regarding the screening of prospective employees and continued employment in the public sector of persons with questionable backgrounds."

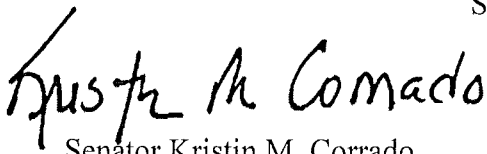
Further, it requires the Committee to "issue a report of its findings and make recommendations on potential improvements to create meaningful policy changes."

We reference that resolution as a reminder that our Committee's mission from the outset always has been to understand and propose solutions to the systemic flaws in the State's employment practices. Our Committee was never meant to be about one man.

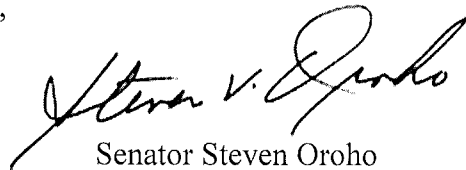
It should be clear that an examination of employment practices at the SDA that led to numerous apparent patronage hires falls squarely within the scope of our Committee's work.

We believe this proposed investigation of the SDA is necessary for the Committee to fulfill its mission of investigating and proposing fixes to a broken process that has allowed numerous questionable hires to hold employment across the administration of Governor Phil Murphy.

Sincerely,



Senator Kristin M. Corrado
Vice-Chair



Senator Steven Oroho
Member